



RETURN

(53)

To an ADDRESS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, dated the 6th February, 1905, for copies of all correspondence between the Government of Canada, or any member thereof, and the Government of the North-west Territories, or any of its members, in reference to the granting of provincial autonomy to the said Territories, since the date of the last prorogation of Parliament.

R. W. SCOTT,
Secretary of State.

OTTAWA, May 19, 1904.

The Right Honourable
Sir WILFRID LAURIER, G.C.M.G.

SIR,—In the course of the correspondence which I had with you last year on the subject of the creation of a province in the Territories, you informed me that on account of the delay in the formation of a province the Territories were enabled to secure larger representation in the House of Commons. While not agreeing with the arguments which you advanced on this question, but still believing that the most important question for the Territories is the obtaining of full provincial powers, I would like to point out to you that if the larger representation in the Commons is to be regarded as a set-off to our demand for provincial powers, we have not received that representation under the new redistribution Act to which we are entitled. Your letter pointed out that by the postponement of the provincial question you were able to deal with the question of Territorial representation apart from the terms of the British North America Act, which in the event of the establishment of the province, would apply. I would, therefore, call your attention to the fact that, according to the figures given by the Department of the Interior, our population at present is about 450,000, and that on the present basis of representation we are entitled to eighteen members instead of the ten given us under the Redistribution Act. This representation (ten), which is, at the present time, far below what we are actually entitled to by population, will long before the first parliament elected under the new Act has come to an end be still more inadequate. I would therefore ask you to consider the question of amending the Redistribution Act before the next general election, and of granting to the Territories at least the representation which they are actually entitled to at the present time; if not, a representation based upon a reasonable expectation of increased population between now and next Dominion census. If we were a province at the present time we would be entitled to the representation which I am asking for.

F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

OTTAWA, June 1, 1904.

The Right Honourable
Sir WILFRID LAURIER, P.C., G.C.M.G.

SIR,—On several occasions since the second day of May, 1900, I have had the honour to direct the attention of the Dominion Government, both through yourself and the Minister of the Interior, to the memorial of the Legislative Assembly of the Terri-

4-5 EDWARD VII., A. 1905

tories adopted on that date, asking that the preliminary steps should be taken towards the creation of provincial institutions in that portion of the Dominion. You will, I have no doubt, recall the conference held in the fall of 1901 by a sub-committee of the Privy Council, of which you were a member, with my then colleague, Mr. A. L. Sifton, and myself, on behalf of the Territorial Government, and you will also be familiar with the extended statement setting forth our views and crystallizing them, as it were, in the form of a draft bill submitted by myself on December 7, 1901, at your request. I presume you are also acquainted with the nature of the communication sent to me by the Hon. the Minister of the Interior in March, 1902, in which it was intimated that the conditions with respect to population and alleged divergence of opinion in the Territories upon details of the question were sufficient reasons, in the opinion of the Dominion Government for not discussing our representations. As the correspondence has been laid before Parliament, I assume that you are aware, in January, 1903, I addressed a communication to the Honourable Mr. Sifton, in which I took occasion to point out that in May, 1902, I submitted the issue to the people of the Territories, with the result that, without exception, every member of the Legislative Assembly supports the contentions of this government upon the question of the urgency of carrying on the negotiations and taking accounts looking towards the establishment of the Territories upon provincial basis, no matter what their views upon other subjects may be. This statement is based, amongst other reasons, upon the fact that even as late as the twentieth day of November last, the members of the Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to present a humble address to His Excellency the Governor General in Council reaffirming the statements and renewing the prayers upon the subject of the provincial establishment contained in their addresses to His Excellency of the second day of May, 1900, and the twenty-fourth day of April, 1903.

To all these addresses and supplementary correspondence the only replies we have been favoured with from the Dominion Government have been the letter referred to above, from the Hon. the Minister of the Interior, dated on March 17, 1902, and another from yourself, dated on June 8, 1903. I deem it necessary in this connection to impress this fact upon you, namely, that the members of the Legislative Assembly are more closely in touch with the people of this country, and they one and all have repeatedly expressed opinions entirely contrary to those which have apparently determined your actions on this question. Further—and I make this statement advisedly—of the thirty-five members of the Assembly, one-half are well known to be in active sympathy with yourself and your government, and these gentlemen are in full accord with the other members of the House upon this subject. I might also refer to the fact that some at least of the political conventions at present being held in the Territories for the selection of candidates representing your party, and which are being largely guided by members of our legislature, are adopting resolutions calling upon your government to take up the question of our provincial establishment and carrying it to a satisfactory conclusion. I think it becoming to mention these matters at this time, as it seems to me that they are in themselves evidence that the advice tendered to you by some of your supporters in Parliament from the Territories has not been in accord with the desires of the people as they are given expression to them.

I need not urge you to deal with this matter upon other grounds, for I have already done so as fully as I am able to do, and it only remains for me on behalf of the Government of the Territories to give point to the representations of the Legislative Assembly by demanding with all respect that your Government will take up the negotiations at the point where they were carried to by my letter of December 7, 1901, and continue them until the matters involved are settled. In doing so I have to say that we request that at the earliest possible date after the conclusion of the negotiations and settlement of the accounts between the Dominion and the Territories, legislation be introduced into Parliament organizing upon the provincial basis that portion of the North-west Territories lying between the western boundary of Manitoba and the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, and extending northward from the international boundary and the northern boundary of Manitoba as far into the district of Athabasca as may be decided

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 53

upon. We further ask that whatever else it includes the legislation introduced shall contain provision for :—

1. The application of the British North America Act as far as possible to the area dealt with ;
2. Adequate representation in both Houses of Parliament, bearing in mind the difference in the ratio of increase of population in the Territories from that of the larger settled parts of the Dominion ;
3. Government, Legislature and the Administration of Justice ;
4. The preservation of vested rights ;
5. The transfer of the public domain with all territorial rights and the beneficial interests therein involved ;
6. A subsidy based as nearly as may be upon those given to the provinces ;
7. Remuneration for that part of the public domain alienated by the Dominion for purely federal purposes ; and
8. The placing of the burden of the Canadian Pacific exemption upon the Dominion, where it properly belongs.

In conclusion I beg to be permitted to state that all these matters have been repeatedly brought to the notice of your Government, and I trust they will now receive some consideration at your hands.

F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

OTTAWA, September 30, 1904.

The Honourable F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been called to the fact that there has been no reply sent to your letters of the 19th May and June 1, respectively. In regard to the subject raised in the letter of May 19, permit me to say that I do not think that I, upon any occasion, indicated an opinion that larger representation in the House of Commons was to be regarded as a set off to the demands of the North-west Territories for provincial powers. I merely pointed out that the action of my Government in declining to introduce legislation to constitute the North-west Territories into a province at the time when your Government requested it had resulted in an increased number of representatives being granted to the North-west Territories in the House of Commons. Had the request for provincial autonomy been granted when it was made, the representation would necessarily have been governed by the British North America Act, and you would now be entitled to six members, which number could not have been increased until the decennial readjustment of representation. By reason of the fact that the North-west Territories still remain without provincial autonomy we have been able to deal more liberally in that respect. It was not suggested that the Territories were entitled to call for an annual readjustment of their representation on the basis of population, nor do I think that any precedent can be found in constitutional practice for such a suggestion. The number of members granted in the last Redistribution Act was based upon a somewhat liberal computation of the population as presumed to exist at the time when the Act was introduced. The question as to what should be the representation of the Territories when they are constituted as a province or provinces is one which will call for renewed consideration when the question of provincial autonomy is dealt with.

In reference to your letter of the 1st of June, I do not think I need discuss at length the representations which it contains, further than to intimate my opinion that circumstances have justified the wisdom of the course adopted by the Government in declining to deal finally two years ago with the many important questions involved in the admission of the North-west Territories into confederation as a province or provinces. Rapid development has taken place in the North-west Territories during the intervening period, and I am inclined to the view that all those who will be called

4-5 EDWARD VII, A. 1905

upon to give consideration to the subject will be in a position to deal with it in the near future with the advantage of fuller and more comprehensive information than could possibly have been available two years ago.

You will have learned prior to the receipt of this letter that Parliament has been dissolved. The new House of Commons will contain not four but ten representatives of the North-west Territories, who, coming fresh from the people, will be entitled to speak with confidence as to the views and requirements of those whom they represent. Should my Government be sustained, we will be prepared immediately after the election to enter upon negotiations for the purpose of arriving at a settlement of the various questions involved in the granting of provincial autonomy, with a view to dealing with the question at the next session of Parliament.

WILFRID LAURIER.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, REGINA, October 5, 1904.

The Right Honourable

Sir WILFRID LAURIER, G.C.M.G.,

President of the Privy Council,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, in which you inform me that your attention has been called to the fact that there had been no reply sent to my letters of May 19 and June 1, that Parliament has been dissolved, and that if your Government is sustained you will be prepared, immediately after the election, to enter upon negotiations for the purpose of arriving at a settlement of the various questions involved in the granting of provincial autonomy with a view to dealing with the question at the next session of Parliament.

F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

